
JOURNAL OF THE BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

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"RARE, DOUBLE STRUCK S-MINT BARBER DIME"

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Published quarterly, and dedicated to bringing together a group of people with similar interests in Barber Coinage for the purpose of advancing appreciation of this series within the numismatic community.

— Steve Epstein, Publisher - Barber Coin Collectors' Journal

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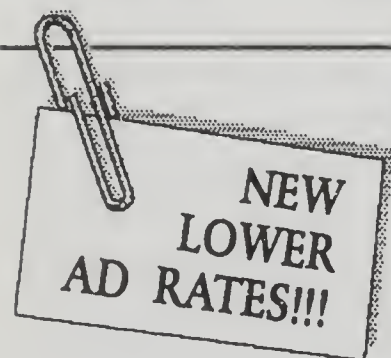
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• Joe Haney • H. G. Tom Crogan • Russell Easterbrooks

We would like to recognize Russell Easterbrooks as the Society's newest Contributing Editor.

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If you have Barbers you want to buy or sell and don't need a lot of space to do it, the *Classified Section* is for you.

We Need Your Articles!!!

The BCCS *Journal* needs your input! If you've got some information to share with the rest of the Society, we'd like to publish it.

Please send submissions (handwritten, typed and/or on-diskette) to:

Steve Epstein

c/o BCCS Article Submissions

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ON THE COVER

RARE, DOUBLE STRUCK S-MINT BARBER DIME

By David Lawrence

This dime was offered to us at the recent Long Beach convention and, of course, we had to buy it! Off-center Barber dimes are seen occasionally, but this is the first double-struck one I can recall.

Technically, it is an "off-center second strike over a first strike." The first two digits appear to be '19' and the coin might well be a 1900-S. Truly an 'S over (literally) S' with the first S high at 12:00 o' clock and the second in its normal position.

I learned long ago that I could not be a collector and a dealer at the same time, so I have sold every nice Barber I have ever owned — until now! This is the only coin in my collection.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters from members are welcome and will be published as space permits. The Publisher reserves the right to edit or omit material in accordance with Society bylaws.

The publication of letters is not necessarily an endorsement by the Society of a particular opinion held by a member. Also, members claiming new discoveries should be willing to permit personal examination of such discoveries by a recognized authority so as to add weight to its validity. Arrangements for such examinations can be made through the Publisher.

Finally, letter writers will not be identified unless they give permission when submitting their letter, or have given their permission on their membership application.

CAN'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT JOURNAL!

Another Journal has arrived. Another Journal has been read. What now? After three or four more readings, another long wait for the next one.

This seems to be the pattern that has formed since I picked up my first BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY Journal. As in the past the contents are well diversified. From facts and figures to thoughts and commentary. The always welcome words of our editor and the excellent design and setup of our printer. The never ending improvements (this month's, the

hard glossy cover). No wonder our Journal is an award winner.

I have found reprints in coin publications rather boring in the past. Not so in the Barber Journal. The sale by B. Max Mehl of his private Barber quarter collection made exceptionally fine reading. The nostalgia of the Jerome Kern sale was another. Anytime I see a celebrity mentioned in regards to a coin collection, I look at my own and wonder if perhaps one of my coins once belonged to that person. If coins could only talk.

—Joe Haney

A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT PAST ARTICLES...

I read with interest Peter B. Haishun's analysis of the Barber Half Dollar rarity survey. Among the "surprise" dates described, one date, 1897-S, was a surprise to me. Although I agree that this coin is scarce in full Extremely Fine and About Uncirculated, it seems relatively available at the Very Fine level. This is out-of-synch with the survey rating of R5 in the Fine/Very Fine category.

Perhaps I've just been lucky, but I've owned two nice, original examples of this date during the past year, both grading VF-30. Admittedly, these were both purchased "out west", but it seems doubtful that this could matter much after more than 90 years. By now, the coins should have been pretty well distributed by collectors and dealers.

Another article about which I'd like to comment is Joe Haney's essay on the virtue of cleaning coins. While I agree that undertaking any sort of chemical interaction with a coin's surface is risky, there are ways of removing contaminants from a coin without an actual loss of metal. Many collectors have been using trichlorotrifluoroethane for some years, myself included. This solution, most commonly marketed under the trademark name "Dissolve", is an inert solvent which

removes surface contaminants such as finger oil and pvc without initiating any chemical reaction. It may not be able to restore a coin which is already damaged, but its use in conjunction with inert storage materials can certainly reduce further problems.

The one drawback with "Dissolve" and similar products is that they have been declared a hazard to the environment. I have been informed by my supplier that producers of this chemical have been ordered to cease its manufacture and sale after January 1, 1992. Apparently, it is now considered a contributing factor in the ongoing depletion of the earth's protective ozone layer.

I suppose if forced to choose between preserving my coin collection and preserving the human race, I'll go with the latter, albeit reluctantly. In future, we may need to resort to less perfect solvents such as alcohol and benzene to clean our coins. Even so, anyone who has ever witnessed dealers at a coin show handling pizza one minute and proof coins the next will want to practice some preventative maintenance.

— David Lange

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FELLOW MEMBER'S COINS STOLEN!

Recently (December 11) a rather disturbing event happened at my medical clinic in Oklahoma. Some Barber dimes were stolen off the front desk of my waiting room. They were already packaged and ready to send to one of our fellow members for appraisal.

They were:

1895-O XF/AU
1897-O AU55
1900-O BU
1906-D BU
1906-S BU
1907-O BU

1907 BU
1908-D MS63
1908-D Double date AU
1914 BU
1914-D BU
1916 BU
1916-S BU

This is three years work gone and uninsured. If anyone attempts to sell this group, get suspicious. Please contact the BCCS publisher if you become aware of the location of this collection in its entirety.

HELP! INFORMATION NEEDED

Help! I'm hoping one of our dealer or collector members out there can furnish some information. In May 1991 at a Raleigh, N.C. coin show I purchased a 1904-S Barber Dime graded MS-64 by NGC. This particular coin is an old reverse hub variety and seems to be a perfect match with the picture and description of Lot 545 of the Allen F. Lovejoy Auction Catalog. My letter to Stack's attempting to confirm that this particular coin was the Lovejoy coin was not successful, as they have no records of the certification num-

ber. I now must revert to a back-up plan which is that some one of our members out there has some information which will help me establish this coin as the Lovejoy coin or as the second high grade example of the old reverse hub variety. The NGC certification no. on my coin is #149094-012.

Any information would be appreciated and should be sent to Bill Harris, 3502 Glen Forest Court, Greensboro, N.C. 27410.

MORE ON "CLEAN IT???"

In the Winter 1991 Journal just received, on page 20 under "Clean It???", I have found that if you have a circulated silver coin, with dirt, grease and or green slime, use "Care" or "Blue Ribbon" cleaner for copper with a terry cloth towel. It will dissolve and remove all three of those things, without removing any metal or toning. It has no damaging effect on the coin.

— Chuck Sherwood

BARBER TIDBIT & QUERIES

A repunched date variety not mentioned in "The Complete Guide to Barber Dimes" is the 1914-D repunched "9" dime which is easy to detect by the doubled upper loop of the 9 and a second knob to the right and lower than the knob at the tail of the 9.

What distinguishing features would appear under magnification for one to be able to confirm that a Barber Half has recut stars, letters, or legends?



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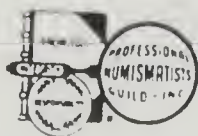
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THEORIES ON THE 1894-S DIME

By Russell Easterbrooks

As we know, 24 1894-S dimes were minted at the mint in San Francisco during the year 1894. There are many Theories why only 24 were made. The first one was that, at the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 1894, it was necessary for the mint at San Francisco to show two dollars and forty cents to close the books on a bullion account.

One other theory was, that the San Francisco mint superintendent J. Daggett had the 24 coins struck for himself and some of his banker friends, when he realized the mint was not to coin any dimes that year.

I believe there is some truth in both of these theories.

My theory is that superintendent Daggett was told later in the year there would not be any dimes minted at that facility for the year 1894.

The 1896 U.S. Mint Report states that all dies are numbered and furnished upon request of the superintendents of the branch mints.

So it would make sense that Daggett would already have had all the dies for the coinage to be minted at San Francisco.

The mint report also states that the dies are to be returned to the Philadelphia mint at the end of the year, where they would be defaced and destroyed.

Daggett would need an excuse to mint some coins for himself and his banker friends. The idea of balancing the books for a bullion account was a good one, as his coiner Charles Gorham retired August 31, 1894 and his wastage account had to be settled.

Also a commission was appointed by the president to test the weight and fineness of gold and silver coins minted at each mint for that year. The U.S. Mint Report of 1895 states the San Francisco mint reserved 3,981 silver coins for the commission, which were delivered to the mint at Philadelphia. The total value of these coins was \$1,973.85. The committee examined 12 coins selected at random from those reserved, and weighed 111 in mass. The interesting figure here is the value of the coins reserved for the commission. The 85 cents would mean no less than one 1894-S dime was seen by the commission. It would also make sense that the committee would want to weigh one coin of each denomination, so here was another excuse for Daggett to coin some dimes.

There is also the possibility that two obverse dies were used. This seems unlikely, however, if the coins were struck after Charles Gorham retired. The new coiner A.T. Spotts an inexperienced coiner may have allowed the dies to clash or make some other mistake. With Daggett watching closely and seeing this, he may have had Spotts use another die.

After Daggett's coins were minted he would have saved 12 or 14 and sent the rest to the president's commission.

The books were now balanced, the commission had some dimes to weigh and check for fineness, and Daggett and his friends had some true rare coins.

Sooner or later more information will surface and maybe some day we will have more than just theories. Searching through information for clues to this and other numismatic puzzles has made my Barber collecting far more fun than just buying coins. Don't miss out on the fun.



B.C.C.S. LITERARY AWARD NOMINATIONS

In the Spring 1991 Journal, the Society announced the establishment of a literary award for the article determined by the membership to be the most enjoyed for the advancement of Barber knowledge. It's now time for you to vote. Any article written by a member and first appearing in the Journal from the first through the twelfth Journal published in the Winter of 1992 is eligible. The winner will receive a \$100 savings bond along with a plaque recognizing the achievement. There will be two runner ups, each of whom will receive a certificate of recognition and a BCCS Commemorative medal. Winners will be announced at our 1992 Summer general meeting in Orlando.

For reference purposes, you may refer to the 3 year synopsis of Journal contents (pages 29-35 of this Journal), or your individual Journals.

* Submissions are to be mailed to:

BCCS Literary Award, P.O. Box 382246, Memphis, TN 38183-2246

* Your vote should state: Name of Article, Author & Journal it appeared in.
Comments on why you chose that article are also welcome.

Deadline for submissions is: June 1, 1992.

TREASURY REPORT

PERIOD ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1991

Opening Balance	Jan. 1, 1991	\$ 870.09
Receipts	Dues	\$ 6,432.00
	Advertising	1,475.80
	Back-issue Sales	306.00
	Comm. Medal Sales	5,564.00
	Misc.	48.00
	Total	<u>13,825.80</u>
Funds Available		\$ 14,695.89
Expenditures	Journal Printing	\$ 6,475.30
	Postage	334.85
	Misc. Printing	468.14
	Commem. Costs (Partial)	7,169.74
	Bank Charges	10.20
	Rental & Dues	84.00
	Misc.	70.50
	Total	<u>\$ 14,612.73</u>
Closing Balance	December 31, 1991	<u><u>\$ 83.16</u></u>

*Paul Reuter,
Treasurer*

Treasurer Notes:

- 1) Society holds approx. \$1,850.00 worth of commemoratives at bullion value.*
- 2) Society has payables of approx. \$800.00 for Journal costs.*

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Orlando, FL	August 11-15	June 9
New York, NY	September 12	August 28
Long Beach, CA	October 1-3	August 18
Tampa, FL	November 5	October 23
Dallas, TX	December 10-12	October 26

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THE 1905-O 'MICRO-O' DIME

Reprinted below is a letter from Tom Miller describing some fascinating documents from the discovery of the 1905-O 'Micro-o' Dime:

Thomas R. Miller
Jack H. Beymer, Inc.
737 Coddington Center
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

12-30-91

Barber Coin Collector's Society,

We have recently exchanged correspondence with Tom Crogan in re the 1905O Micro-O dimes. In one conversation I mentioned to him that we have a specimen of this variety which was once the property of Howard R. Newcomb, an eminent numismatist and the author of "United States Copper Cents 1816-1857" and several other important monographs.

This coin was sold to us by D.N. Bland, a specialist in early United States copper coins, who provided us with this pedigree. He acquired the coin in a collection he purchased from Willard Blaisdell of Elizabeth, NJ, who may have gotten the coin from Henry C. Hines, both prominent collectors who were contemporary with Newcomb.

The coin came to us in a small envelope labeled in Newcomb's printing as follows, " 1905 Dime / O mint / Very Small O / I think this variety very / rare. Ever hear of this variety?" This was accompanied by a fragment of a letter, signed by Newcomb, as follows, " Enclosed is a 1905 Dime of O mint. I have never heard of an uncir example of this variety having a very small O. I picked up eight pieces from circulation many years ago. This piece is yours with my compliments

Yours truly

Howard R Newcomb

The letter and envelope are not dated. I have enclosed photocopies of these items. The coin grades VG10, About Fine.

I hope this information is of some help in your research of this variety.

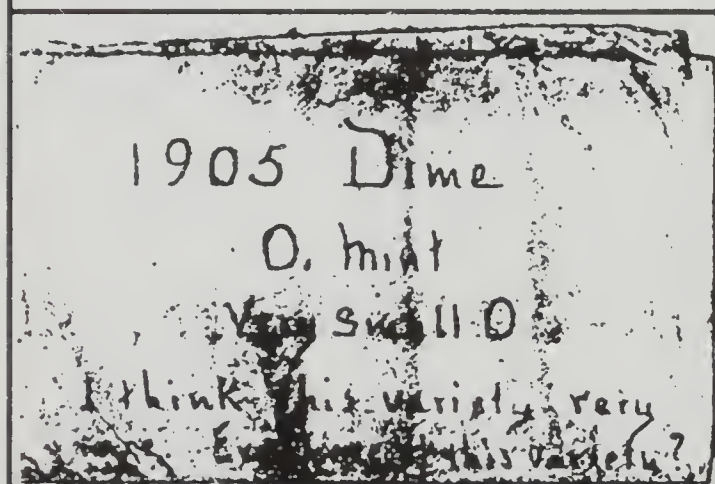
Your truly,

Thomas R. Miller

Thomas R. Miller

Enclosed is a 1905 Dime of O mint.
 I have never heard of an earlier example
 of this variety having a very small O.
 I picked up eight pieces from circulation
 many years ago. This piece is yours
 with my compliments

Yours truly
 Howard R. Newcombe



Hand-written note (above) from Howard Newcombe accompanying Micro-O dime discovery (left)

VARIETY CORNER

1909-S S/S BARBER QUARTER

by Joe Haney

Keep an eye out for a 1909-S Barber quarter with a repunched mint mark. I saw a very nice example of this coin at an auction recently but could not even get a fair bid in on it, the price went so high. It was not listed as a repunched mint mark and I am sure it was not purchased as one. The 'S' shows a nicely separated second curve, south inside of the upper loop. I could also see what appeared to be some evidence of the second 'S' below the middle bar of the 'S'.

Since I wrote this first paragraph, I saw another of the same coin described above. This second coin also had a repunched '1' in the date. It showed under the base only, but a nice spread. I can't say for sure that the first one didn't also have the repunched '1'. There is the possibility both coins were one and the same, although I don't believe this to be the case. I did see both in the same hall but with a different auction house each time. The time frame was too close for the same coin to appear in both auctions. But alas the coin again went far in excess of its worth. I will always pay a premium for a nice Barber coin, especially if it's a variety coin. I will not go overboard and pay a ridiculous price no matter how much I like a coin. I am in this hobby to enjoy myself and if I would pay far in excess of what I thought to be a fair price for a coin, that is what I would always remember each time I saw that particular coin. Just something for you dealers and other folks to think about when you go to sell a coin.



J.T. DONAHUE TO HEAD UP BCCS RESEARCH COORDINATION

The society is pleased to announce the appointment of J.T. Donahue as Vice President, Research. In this capacity J.T. will help get members' questions answered, see that key findings are published in the Journal, coordinate article selection and direct key research projects. On this latter responsibility, J.T. will head up the effort to help validate key dates in the original BCCS Rarity Rating Surveys through the surveying of actual member inventories. He has formed survey teams for this purpose, the first of which will appear in the next journal.



J.T. Donahue hails from New Brunswick, NJ. Like many of us, he has had several stages of collecting interests, the switch from silver to clad coinage plus the declining yields from circulation and bankroll searches severely diminished J.T.'s interest in the hobby. In 1969, he sold most of his coins to finance the completion of his Buffalo Nickel collection. Within a year, he completed the set and thus ended the first stage of his collecting interest. By this time, J.T.'s priorities had shifted to the academic demands and the extra-curricular activities of college life. He studied history at Seton Hall University and graduated in 1971, receiving his M.A. two years later.

After two years with the army he returned to teach at Seton Hall and Rutgers Universities where he received his Ph.D. in 1989. J.T. renewed his interests in coins and wrote "Collecting Buffalo Nickels" for the Winter 1990-91 issue of the *Nickel News*. He was also a contributor to Michael Wescott's book, *The U.S. Nickel Five Cent Piece*.

In 1988, J.T. expanded his collecting interests to include Barber Dimes and Barber Halves. He joined B.C.C.S. in 1989. His first article for the *B.C.C.S. Journal* appeared in the Summer 1990 issue. He subsequently authored four articles for the Journal, mostly focusing on the 1895-O Dime. A final article on the 1895-O dime is in the works for a future issue of the *Journal*. J.T.'s most prized numismatic possession is...you've guessed it: His AU 1895-O Dime!

J.T. Donohue is also a member of the New Jersey Numismatic Society and he belongs to two local coin clubs: the Watching Hills Coin Club and the Trenton Numismatic Club.

Please join me in congratulating J.T. in his new role.

Steve Epstein, *Publisher*

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WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MINT IN 1908?

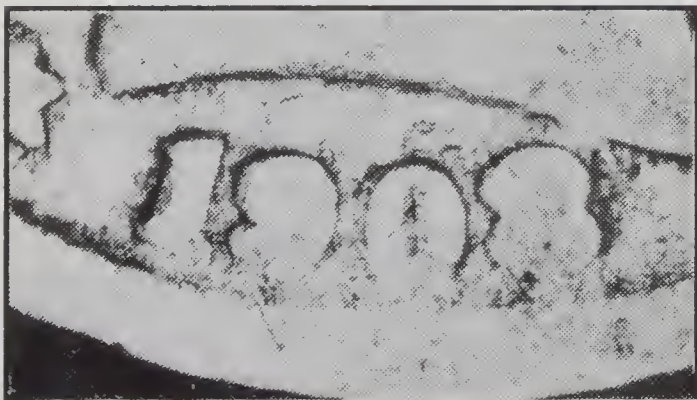
By Christopher F. Pilliod

Something happened in the Mint during 1908 that greatly affected U.S. coinage from that point on. From what I've studied the following is my opinion of the events that transpired.

At a point close to the end of the coining calendar year in 1908, the mint apparently produced some working dies for production use or trials which did not have the date emplaced into the die by the traditional method of hand punching. Instead, the date was emplaced further back in the die preparation stage, possibly in the master hub, but at least into the working hub. It appears that this was done on at least the Barber Quarter in 1908. In 1909 the date was emplaced into the hubs for all denominations and all coinage.

The proof lies in evaluation of two 1908-P Barber Quarters, one of which is unfortunately a low grade. The first photo shows double-punched date, obviously done by hand by a mint diemaker. The second piece is of extreme interest to the numismatist. It is a 1908 quarter with a very strongly doubled die obverse, most noticeable in "IN GOD WE TRUST". A look at the date shows what seems to be strong doubling in the same clockwise direction with the same degree of strength. This would confirm that the date was transferred back to at least the working hub stage (and perhaps further).

A higher grade specimen is needed to substantiate this theory, but I have been unable to locate one after lengthy searching. Another point which tends to support this theory is the fact while there exists many repunched dates in the Barber series prior to 1909, I have yet to see one bearing the date 1909 or later. This includes proof and business strikes. If any member has information to share on this topic I would be interested to hear from them (Chris Pilliod, P.O. Box 12722, Fort Wayne, IN 46864).



(Upper left) Barber Quarter repunched date; (Lower left) Doubled die with evidence of doubling in date; (Above) Barber Quarter doubled die.

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1911 ANACS MS60 Lt. toning	90.
1912 ANACS MS62 Lt. toning	110.
1912-S ANACS AU50 Bright	60.
1914 ANACS MS61 Lt. toning	100.
25¢ 1892-O NGC MS62 Med. toning	250.
1895-O ANACS MS61 Med. toning	300.
1899-O ANACS MS61 Bright	300.
1900-S ANACS AU55 Lustrous	110.
1906 ANACS MS61 Lt. toning	160.
1908-O ANACS MS60 Lustrous	150.
1914 NGC MS62 Toned	190.
1915-S PCGS AU55 Bright	175.
1916-D ANACS AU58 Toned	110.
50¢ 1892-O PCGS MS62 Lt. toning	875.
1893 NGC MS61 Lt. Toned	410.
1893 PCGS MS61 Toned	400.
1893-O ANACS AU55 Lt. toning	300.
1893-O ANACS MS61 Toned	460.
1894-O ANACS MS62 Lustrous	550.
1894-S ANACS MS62 Lt. toning	480.
1898 ANACS MS60 Lt. toning	315.

1899-O PCGS AU55 Toned	315.
1900-O PCGS AU55 Toned	400.
1902 NGC MS60 Toned	435.
1906-S ANACS AU50 Lt. toning	265.
1906-S ANACS MS62 Lt. toning	500.
1907-O NGC MS62 Toned	475.
1909 ANACS MS62 Bright	420.
1910 ANACS MS60 Lustrous	425.

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50¢ 1900-O VF/XF 35	100.
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BARBER QUARTER DIE CRACKS

By Paul Reuter

While my favorite coin series is the Barbers, I do enjoy other series as well. The Capped Bust Halves are very interesting and I have learned to appreciate the variety of the coins in the series. Collecting them has gotten me into the world of die cracks, die clashes, filled letters, missing serifs and the like. Recently after receiving a Barber Quarter from Dave Lawrence, I mentioned to him that the coin had a prominent die crack. Dave said that some day someone should look into that aspect of Barbers as he thought no one had done so as yet. I will try to take a small first step in that direction.

When either an upper or lower die evidences a crack, some of the planchet metal is forced into the crack. This results in a raised ridge appearing on the struck coin and the coin is then noted as having a die crack. Most die cracks appear in the fields of the coin, some running from device to device, but seldom showing on or through the device.

Die cracks can be progressive in nature, starting out small and growing as successive strikes are made. This gives rise to the expressions of early and late stage die cracks, the latter leading up to the discarding of the die. In my set of 72

Bust Halves, I have 12 with significant die cracks or one for every six coins.

So, how does that compare with my Barber Quarters? Well, in looking at 80 coins, which includes one of every issue plus a few duplicates, I have found 20 coins that exhibit die cracks of any significance. Where a coin shows a crack on each side, I count that as two, as it represents two dies that have cracked.

Listed below are my findings:

- 1) 1892-S A crack starts at star 7 (upper right) and runs down and slightly through star 13 (lower right). Another small crack shows from the 1 of 1892 to the bottom of the ribbon.
- 2) 1896-P Reverse. Several small cracks show around the word DOLLAR. Most visible is from the right foot of R to the edge.
- 3) 1897-0 A crack starts at star 12 and runs to the 7 of 1897 and on through star 1 to the edge of below star 2.
- 4) 1897-S A faint crack is visible from under WE to the hair and emerging again under IN.
- 5) 1898-P A long crack runs from TRUST to star 12 and starting again at the 1 in 1898 to star 1 and faintly around to WE.
- 6) 1900-S Several cracks show. One is from star 4 to star 6 and also faintly and almost continuously from star 8 to star 13. There is also some extra metal in the hair below GOD and several small cracks in the hair.
- 7) 1902-0 Reverse. A sharp crack is showing from under the U in Pluribus to the wing and above the U to the nearest star.
- 8) 1903-0 Reverse. There appears to be a crack from the R in DOLLAR to the nearest denticle. Also the serifs of LLAR are all connected, elephant style, evidently by cracks.
- 9) 1904-P A small crack shows from the left point of star 13 and continues across the lower tip of the neck.
- 10) 1905-0 A very noticeable crack starts at star 11 and continues along the bottom of the neck and through Mr. Barber's B and on to the lower ribbon.
- 11) 1907-0 Reverse. At least 10 noticeable cracks show mostly in the USA legend but also from star to star in several places. This coin also shows doubling in all of the legend except UNITED STATES. The mint mark O is also doubled.
- 12) 1907-0 Obverse. A crack runs from below star 12 to the neck and from the neck to star 1.
- 13) 1908-0 A very plain crack runs from below star 12 to the tip of the neck and another goes through most of the date and on to star 1.
- 14) 1911-S There is a series of cracks from star 7 to star 13 and another series from star 1 to star 6. Another runs through the date.
- 15) 1911-S Reverse. There at least six small cracks around the legend and another from star to star.
- 16) 1912-P A small crack runs through the date.

-
- 17) 1913-P Reverse. A crack runs from the left edge of the scroll through the D to the edge.
 - 18) 1913-S There is a sharp crack from the right tip of the neck through the 3 and on to the edge.
 - 19) 1915-S A small crack runs from star 13 to the neck.
 - 20) 1916-D Reverse. A crack runs across the top of RICA and another from the Q to the U in UNITED. Also several small cracks can be seen.

There are some points to be made. All of the coins I have observed in this study are graded from AU to MS. After looking at a mixture of VF and XF Barber Halves it appears that cracks are harder to find on lower grade Barbers. This is not the case in Bust Halves as cracks show up well on VF specimens. Perhaps the mint was more careful on the larger Barbers. Next, I have listed what I found and it is possible that younger eyes would have found more examples than shown above. Also, there some very minor cracks that I did not list either because they were so small or because they were inconclusive. If it didn't show well with 10X magnification, I dropped it from the list. To quickly scan a coin, I used a 10X hand-held glass. To further examine the coin I used a 15 power microscope with an independent light source. It is important that the light strike the coin at an angle and not be directly aimed at the target. Further, it is best to rotate the coin as cracks can show from one side but not the other.

So, there it is. About one coin in four of my Barber Quarter set showed significant die cracks. This was a study done by an amateur and others may wish to further the study. Anyone can feel free to use my data as they find it helpful. If someone has comments or questions, I can be reached at 415 Ellen Dr., Brookhaven, Ms. 39601.



REGIONAL MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

B.C.C.S. EASTERN REGIONAL MEETING

1:00 PM Saturday, June 27, 1992

at the

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*Meeting room number will be posted at the show entrance.
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AN INTERESTING VARIETY

by Jon Potts

Let me start out by giving a quick history on my collecting and how I got started collecting Barber coins.

I started collecting coins in 1960 while still in high school. At this time all of my coins came from circulation.

During the early 60's I sold my halves and quarters (complete set of Walkers and a complete set of Washington Quarters) at face value to meet expenses.

Having kept my cents, nickels and dimes, in the later 60's I started buying some of the Mercury Dimes that I had not found in circulation. While looking through a Dime book at a local coin shop I saw my first Barber Dime. I started collecting Barber Dimes in VG working my way up to the XF-AU level. During this period little was written on varieties, so I was just collecting by date and mint.

As time went on more and more variety coins were being found and published, they were still of no interest to me. I became interested in Seated Dimes, which as everyone knows has many varieties, with more being found every day. I then decided to make Dimes my specialty and began paying more attention to varieties of all the Dime series. About this time the Lovejoy Collection went up for auction. Since this collection contained the most complete set of all Dimes known, I purchased the catalog to use as a reference.

Looking through the Lovejoy catalog one Barber Dime in particular caught my eye. It was a 1909 "O" over an inverted "D". The fact that the wrong mintmark was punched inverted, then repunched with the correct mintmark really fascinated me. Looking through my 1909-O's I found the one pictured in this article. This is a coin I purchased in 1985 in St. Louis and had never really noticed that it was "different". Since the picture in the Lovejoy catalog was not blown up enough to compare with my coin I really didn't know what I had. The Lovejoy coin is also pictured on page 94 of David Lawrence's book on Barber Dimes.



1909-O/Inverted D Dime mint mark

I took my coin to the ANA Show in Chicago and showed it to several other Barber Dime collectors at the BCCS meeting. These people included our President Steve Epstein, Joe Haney, Phil Carrigan, Bill Cregan and J.T. Donohue. I also showed the coin to Walter Breen. It was decided by all who viewed the coin that it was not the 1909 "O" over inverted "D", but instead it was a 1909 "O" over inverted "O".

To be an "O" over inverted "D" there must be serif's from the "D" protruding out on the right side of the "O". These serif's would be on the right not left because of being inverted. My coin does not have the serif's as you can see in the photo shown. Also the "O" is shifted further to the right on a "O" over inverted "D" as can be seen on page 94 of David Lawrence's book.

Now you are probably wondering what is the difference between a "O" over inverted "O" and a "O" over "O". If you will examine the "O" mintmark on a normal 1909 you will notice the inside curves are different. The curve on the left is almost straight while the right side is more curved. So if you put a "O" over a "O" the curves on the inside of the mintmark would be parallel.

On my coin, as you can see, the curve on the inside right of the bottom mintmark is straight while the inside right curve of the top mintmark is curved as a normal mintmark would be. This is what I first took as being the straight side of a "D" mintmark, which inverted would be the right side as on my coin.

We can only wonder how many of these exist. Another collector at the BCCS meeting had what could be the same coin. The low grade prevented us from being sure. My coin grades AU, so all of the detail shows well.

I have other varieties of Barber Dimes that are not listed. I will write about these later as time permits. I hope this has been of interest and will start you looking for other varieties. Once you get hooked on varieties you can't stop looking!



COMMENTS & CONTROVERSY

COMMENTS AND CONTROVERSY

By H.G. Tom Crogan

Measuring the 1905 MICRO "o" Barber Dime.

Beginning just over a year ago to get serious and find out as much as possible about the MICRO o dime, I have now come to a few personal conclusions.

The letters and advertising brought about ownership in over 83 pieces and the promise of usage of about a dozen more for researching. The greatest numbers found are in the grades, AG3 through GOOD 4. I have yet to find offered at a Coin Show or Auction any example over the Grade of XF45.

A goodly number of offers have exceeded values that were judged to be fair, but I purchased at the Sellers Price as we were searching for not only the grades

to study but to also ascertain the pricing structure. I asked that the Dealer or Collector give as much information as possible and to know of MS60 and better in existence although I've not as yet been able to examine and measure such.

As a part of this undertaking, I was attempting to measure size and distances to ascertain how many dies were used to strike the MICRO o DATED dimes. Was it because some Cajun had a little too much "White Lightning" or was it just a mistaken Barber Quarter "O" imprinted upon just one die that was used until it wore out its usage?

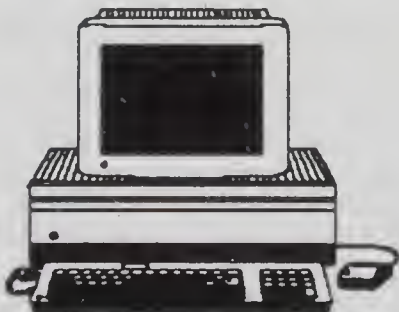
After all the gathering of information, ideas, and opinions, plus measurements of size and distance, I am of the opinion that only one die was used. It is now a guess as to HOW MANY coins were struck from this die until it became useless and was replaced. Was 5 thousand struck?, 10 thousand?, or 15 or 25...who knows. Breen's Encyclopedia lists it as RARE #3545 and no mintage figure.

It would not be fair to list names of those who helped in this research in the fear that I may leave out someone who had given help. Many participated in various ways and I have come up with the following VALUE SCALE in the SELLING RANGES for the MICRO o in various grades offered and bought.

R3 - GOOD@	2.00	to	6.00	R5 - XF @	115.00	to	150.00
R3 - V.G. @	12.00	to	25.00	R6 - AU @	200.00	to	500.00
R4 - FINE @	40.00	to	60.00	R7 - UNC@	1500.00	to	3000.00
R4 - V.F. @	80.00	to	95.00	R8 - BU @	5000.00	to	10,000.00

With over 60 pieces in low grade A.G. and GOOD, I am of the opinion that these pieces may be RARITY 3 with each advanced grade stepping up one point on the RARITY SCALE with the B.U. pieces rating 8 as there are but very few to be found. These figures are but personal observations as taken from over a year of advertising research and multiple Coin Shows, Auctions, and Price List Offerings.

Publisher's Footnote: Through the efforts of Tom Crogan, we have been able to obtain copies of original Newcomb documents of the Micro O Dime (see pages 12-13).



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THE CASE FOR COLLECTING "P" MINT BARBER DIMES

By Arno Safran

The lure of acquiring a rare or better date coin out of circulation has captured the fantasy of many a collector, but realistically, that is what it is; a fantasy, for in the world of clad cupro-nickel coinage, the likelihood of one coming across a 1895-0 Barber dime or 1901-S quarter in circulation is virtually nil. Of course, most of us are well aware of this fact of numismatic life and expect to acquire our coins from dealers for a price. When it comes to the key date needed to complete a particular series we attempt to procure the elusive entity in the highest possible grade we can afford.

Let's say that we have been putting together a collection of Barber Quarters averaging AU-50 grade. Some are XF-45, others may be graded as high as MS-63. We attempt to locate a 1901-S somewhere along the line and find that the spread between AU and MS-63 BID is between \$6,100 and \$13,000. A specimen graded GOOD is bid at only \$850. If one were collecting a complete set of Barber quarters averaging FINE-12, the Good '01-S wouldn't look too out of place; but in a set averaging AU it would. Besides, there are plenty of other roadblocks to overcome in addition to the '01-S. To a lesser extent, the same can be said about Barber dimes.

An 1895-0 Barber dime graded FINE-12 will cost between \$380 and \$450. In VF probably upwards of \$500. For that price, one can acquire many attractive AU-55 or better specimens of "P" Mint Barber dimes; perhaps on the way to completing a complete date set of the series from the Philadelphia mint in that grade. The individual who insists that a complete set must include all the branch mints will receive no argument here, but for one who is constrained by monetary limitations as well as aesthetic principles, the dilemma he faces is this. After paying around \$2.00 for most Barber dimes averaging FINE grade, do I really want to shell out \$400 for the 1895-0 in the same grade; not to mention the other partial keys that, while less costly are nonetheless still way above the pittance one has to remit for most other dates in that grade?

Looking at the problem from the more lofty heights of a set being formed averaging AU-50 in which most of the dates are bid between \$35 and \$40, does this collector have the financial where-withal to come up with \$1,700 for the '95-0 to maintain the set's overall aesthetic balance, or does he go for the \$100 specimen in GOOD in order to boast that he/she has finally completed the set.

For me the problem was solved long ago when I completed a Shield Nickels set averaging AU-55 (business strikes only). Having successfully rationalized that proofs were not intended for use in daily commerce, it was but a small extension of this reasoning to conclude that a full run of dates for a particular series was in itself, an attractive collection in its own right. It was obvious, given my penchant for lustrous coins, that AU-55 was an affordable compromise and

since series which included two or three branch mints per date were by now prohibitively expensive - even in AU, let alone "unc", there was no way I could finish a set of the Barber series of silver coins or those series that followed; such as the complete run of Buffalo-Indian Head nickels or Mercury dimes for example.

Now there are some series in which one can complete a full date set by switching between the branch mints and the Philadelphia mint in order to come up with the least expensive coin for a given year of that series. The Indian Head - Buffalo nickel type comes to mind. Trying to complete a series set from just the Philadelphia Mint is not as easy as one might think. With Standing Liberty Quarters the 1916 stops you right at the starting gate. Barber Dimes offer the collector a wonderful opportunity to have one's numismatic cake and eat it - as it were, for there are no serious roadblocks to acquiring every "P" Mint date from 1892 through 1916 averaging a grade of Choice AU. Not that there aren't challenges, for true collecting is no fun without effort, and even "P" Mint Barber dimes offer the collector interesting experiences and challenges along the way.

Another important reason to collect "P" Mint Barber dimes aside from the budgetary factor is the sharper strike that most Philadelphia struck specimens display when compared to the branch mints. The L-I-B-E-R-T-Y is clearer and the forehead offers more hair detail as well.

The fact that many more pieces were struck in Philadelphia as compared with the various branch mints would suggest that every "P" mint date must be extremely common in comparison. At the time these coins were being coined, the larger population centers for which they were intended were located in the industrial northeast and the northern midwestern cities.

Add to this the waves of immigrants entering the U.S. at this time, and one has to conclude that "P" mint Barber coinage was spent in proportion to the population. Less coins may have been struck in New Orleans, San Francisco and later, Denver, but there were fewer people in those regions. As a result the surviving choice AU specimens for many of the "P" mint dates are far less than the current price structure would indicate. There are a number of "sleepers" out there waiting to be plucked off the numismatic vine. Below follows a listing of the AU "P" Mint dates from the most common to the scarcer issues based primarily on the author's experience, but also in concert with knowledgeable dealers.

Category I: Very common dates:	1892, 1916, 1913 & '14, 1910 thru 1912, 1915*
Category II: Common:	1906 & 1907, 1909, 1908, 1900* and 1905
Category III: Less common:	1897 thru 1899, 1893, 1901 & 1902; 1903; 1904
Category IV: Scarce:	1896, 1894, 1895

Within each category I have listed what I have found to be the most common at the left and the least common at the extreme right. Both the 1900 and 1915 dates show an asterisk which indicates that these dates are less common in AU-50 or better than once believed. The 1903 and especially the 1904 are "sleep-

ers". At between \$35 and \$50 in AU-50, buy all that you can find, but first you'll have to find them. The 1894 is quite elusive, but is priced accordingly throughout the grade spread, so the scarcity of that issue is no secret. Like the 1895-0 for the entire series, the 1895-P is the "key" of the "P" Mint series, but in AU at around \$350 is not all that out of proportion with the rest of the set while boasting a far lower mintage than the 1921-P Mercury dime priced at \$550 to \$600.

Up until recently, the Coin Dealer Newsletter Monthly Summary (CDNMS) listed all "P" Mint Barber dimes struck from 1897 thru 1916 at the same prices in ALL GRADES. The 1892 in AU was listed for \$1.00 more than the aforementioned date group in the same grade. Now according to my findings which have been corroborated by a number of knowledgeable dealers in the field, this pricing structure cannot be valid. With the rise of such specialty clubs as the BCCS, more and more persons out there have been and are seeking higher grade Barber coinage (XF or better) so the demand is there for Philadelphia struck pieces as much as the tougher branch mint issues. The fact remains that for every 1904-P Barber dime one encounters in XF-45 or better condition there must be at least 50 to 100 1892s or 1916s within the same grade levels available; perhaps even more. Yet the 1904 is priced at about the same as the first and last dates of the series. The same applies to many other "P" Mint dates as well, especially from the first few years of this century. They're just not out there "nice"!

So, putting together a matched set of "P" Mint Barber dimes averaging AU-55 grade, while not prohibitively expensive, will take a considerable amount of time in searching. When one of the elusive dates does surface, it may exhibit a lackluster appearance, a weak strike, a rim nick or two or other problems and your search continues. However, when one finally does complete a year set in this grade, the collector needn't take a "back seat" to anybody including those who you that "key dates" are everything and/or "full sets" mean everything. How many folks out there can afford them? Happy hunting!



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On page 35 is a coupon for one FREE classified ad. Use it if you want to buy, sell or trade any of your Barbers.

"SUN BONNET GIRL"

By Jack White

While eating dinner with my mother after attending a Sunday morning coin show, I was showing her a few of my purchases. As she was viewing a nice circulated Barber quarter, she asked if I was familiar with the "SUN BONNET GIRL?"

Never having heard of this "girl" in the more than twenty years of being a collector, I was intrigued. She turned the quarter to the reverse and rotated it 180° (upside down). the "girl" magically appeared! The eagle's tail feathers are the girl's sun bonnet, viewed from the back. The claws are her arms. The eagle's legs are transposed into her shoulders and back. The shield gives definition to her waist and long flowing dress, the type worn by young women during the first two decades of the twentieth century -- the time of course, when the Barber quarter and half were being produced. Lastly, with a bit more imagination, I suppose you could envision the eagle's wings as another part of her long dress, flowing out to the sides.

My mother grew up in the late 1920's and 1930's. She was told of the "Sun Bonnet Girl" by her mother. All of her girlfriends were likewise familiar with it. Not being a collector she didn't realize the half dollar also has the same "girl" on its reverse, also. It was the "girl" on the quarter only, not on the half. Halves were rarely seen by her and her friends. After all, a "Sun Bonnet Girl" quarter could provide an ice cream cone, a soda, candy, and a movie on a Saturday afternoon in the Depression era 1930's.

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THE MAN BEHIND THE COIN

CHARLES E. BARBER 7TH CHIEF ENGRAVER OF THE U.S. MINT 1880 TO 1917

by Henry Phillipsen

Charles E. Barber was born on November 16, 1846 in London, England. In the mid 1850s his grandfather, John Barber, brought the entire family to Boston to live. In 1865 William Barber, Charles' father, was hired by James Longacre to work as an assistant engraver. When James Longacre died in 1869 William Barber was appointed Chief Engraver of the mint. Charles Barber soon afterward joined his father as an assistant engraver.

William Barber died in office in 1879. President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed Charles as the 7th Chief Engraver of the mint in 1880. This makes the Barbers the only father and son chief engravers of the mint. In 1879 and 1880 Charles designed the obverse of the Flowing Hair \$4 gold Stellas. During his tenure Charles designed four of our circulating coins. In 1883 Liberty Head nickel which was struck until 1912. The dime and quarter from 1892 to 1916 and the half dollar from 1892 to 1915. All which are known by the designer's name.

Charles E. Barber designed more circulating and commemorative coins than any other chief engraver of the mint.

Late in the year 1880 the King of the Hawaiian Islands asked Barber to design silver coinage for his kingdom. In 1883 the dime, quarter, half dollar and dollar bearing a design with the likeness of the King were issued.

In 1892 the Barber coinage, as we know it, was issued with a lot of negative comments. In 1892 and 1893 the Columbian Exposition half dollar was issued. Barber did the obverse and Morgan the reverse. In 1893 Barber designed the Isabella Quarter, the only U.S. coin with a foreign dignitary on it. In 1900 the Lafayette Dollar, was the first commemorative of that denomination and the first authorized to bear a portrait of one of our Presidents. In 1915 the Panama-Pacific Exposition half dollar and it is the first half dollar commemorative to carry the motto "In God We Trust."

In 1903 Barber designed the first one dollar gold commemorative honoring the Louisiana Purchase. Barber designed both Jefferson and McKinley coins. In 1904 and 1905 the Lewis and Clark Exposition. In 1915 Barber designed the first 2 1/2 dollar gold commemorative for the Panama Pacific Exposition. In 1916 and 1917 he designed the obverse of the McKinley Memorial gold dollar.

Charles E. Barber never designed a 20th century circulating coin. President Teddy Roosevelt thought Barber to be an unimaginative coin designer, but a brilliant sculptor. So in 1907 he brought in Saint Gaudens to design the gold

coins. In 1909 Victor David Brenner designed the one cent, James Earl Fraser in 1913 designed the Buffalo Nickel, in 1916 Herman MacNeil designed the Standing Liberty Quarter and in 1916 the Mercury dime and Walking Liberty half dollar was designed by Adolph Weinman.

One has to wonder how much input Barber had with all of these coins of the 20th Century. The type one and two of the Buffalo nickel, the same with MacNeil's Standing Liberty quarter. His problems with Saint Gaudens are well documented, but that could be another article at a later time.

Barber was a private man, he was married twice. His first wife died in 1898. This marriage produced one child, a girl, named Edith. In 1902 Barber married Carolina Gaston. No children came from this marriage. He was an avid reader, musician, liked to walk, for this satisfied his love of observing and studying nature.



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BARBER QUARTER AND BARBER HALF SURVEY TEAMS ACTIVATED

Seven people have signed up for the B.C.C.S. Collection Survey Program.

Len Ariagno will head the Half Dollar Survey Team which also includes Tom Woodworth and Pete Haishun. The following individuals have signed up for the Quarter Survey Team:

- Dale Krueger
- John Gardner
- Ken Hill
- Neil Morse

All seven of these people are very knowledgeable and dedicated to the project. So please take the time to respond to any survey forms that appear in subsequent issues of our journal. The Barber Half survey will appear in the next issue.



ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

If you haven't already done, so, take a few moments and fill out the form on page 35 of our last issue regarding article submissions and send it to me at:

J.T. Donahue, V.P. Research, BCCS
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No. Brunswick, N.J. 08902

If you are a new member or you can't locate your last issue of the Journal, kindly drop me a line stating your topic(s) of interest and when you could have your article(s) ready for publication.

Remember, Barbers are one of the most under-researched areas of numismatics today and what you have to say may be of great importance to the entire numismatic community!



SMITHSONIAN ACCEPTS GIFT OF CHARLES E. BARBER PAPERS

Reprinted from 2/17/92 issue of Coin World with permission.

The personal papers of Charles E. Barber, Chief Engraver at the U.S. Mint between 1880 and 1917, have been acquired by the National Numismatic Collection at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington.

The documents were donated by Harvey, Norman and Lawrence Stack of the numismatic firm of Stack's in New York. According to Smithsonian officials, the material provide an important record of the day-to-day operations of U.S.

die makers and coiners. They also provide researchers with first-hand evidence of the Proof and regular coinage struck at the Mint during Barber's tenure.

The donation includes Barber's correspondence and drawings related to the dies and coins for 15 nations, a majority of them in Latin America; his personal notebooks on U.S. coins and medals in a collection he owned and on which he worked; and the die books maintained by A.W. Straub, foreman of the die makers room at the Philadelphia Mint from 1880 through 1886.

Among the information in Straub's die books is proof the Proof 1884 Trade dollars were legitimately struck at the Philadelphia Mint.

Barber's papers, which were owned by the Stack family for almost 10 years, are the latest in a series of what was termed "substantial" donations to the museum's collection in a Jan. 29 announcement of the acquisitions.



JOURNAL CONTENTS SYNOPSIS

FIRST THREE YEARS

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With this information we can easily reference the contents of each of the first 12 Journals in one convenient location. You can use this list to order previous Journals (\$3.00 each) or as a reference to select the best article for the literary award.

VOLUME 1, Number 1, 1989, SPRING

FIRST ISSUE - Barber Coin Collectors Society, JOURNAL official name for newly formed Club. BARBER'S, An Overlooked Series.

The Mystery of Classic Barber Rarity.

The Barber Knowledge Barometer.

The Purposes of BCCS. President's Message.

First Format of Questions and Answers.

BCCS Bylaws submitted to Members.

Barber Coinage Library Discussed.

First Advertising Schedule published.

Membership asked to participate fully.

Back Page has first Membership Application.

All Memberships of 1989 are CHARTER.

VOLUME 1, Number 2, 1989, SUMMER

An 1891 Barber Half?...NAW...
BARBER'S. A Perspective of their History.
Collectors Challenge. The 1894-P B/50¢.
Survey of Rarity Ratings for B/10¢ Begins.
Dime Survey Guide sent to Membership.
Multiple Questions & Answers...???

BCCS first ANA Membership Meeting - Pittsburgh.
Known and Unknown Varieties. B/25¢ & B/50¢.
Membership Feedback on Library other items.
New Membership Applications discussed.
General BCCS Meetings reviewed.
Diary of a Barber Coin Dealer.
Grading Barbers. Part I.

VOLUME 1, Number 3, 1989, FALL

The 1905 MICRO-O Dime Rarity.
BCCS Membership tops 300.
An Editorial on Grading.
Grading Barbers. Part 2.
Official Barber ANA Grading Standards.
Questions & Answers. 1893/2 Overdate.
An In depth Look at Barbers.
Design, Strike, Surfaces, Barber -10-25-50¢
BCCS General Meeting at ANA Pittsburgh
Area Reps. for East, Central, West Needed.
New Discoveries discussed by Breen.
Die and Hub Varieties. B/10-25-50¢.
Proper Storage & Handling of Coins.

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1901-S Quarter. King of the Barbers.
Presidential Message. New JOURNAL format.
Multiple Letters to Editor.
A Collector's Defense of Barber.
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Original and Problem Free Barbers.
What Should You Pay for In-between Grades?
Down to One. 1900-O Hard to Find.
Barber Bourse Questionnaire.
Those New Silver Coins. N.Y. TIMES. 1892.
BCCS to move from Akron to Memphis.
Odds & Ends. Barber Barter. Treasury report.

VOLUME 2, Number 1, 1990, SPRING

Those scarce New Orleans Quarters.
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Barber Quarters. Rarity Ratings Begins.
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Interpreting BCCS Rarity Rating Reports.
Barber Quarters. Series Date Analysis.
The Bookworm. Guide to Barber 25¢.
Odds & Ends. Questions & Answers.

VOLUME 2, Number 2, 1990, SUMMER

Treasure of the lost Dimes of Denver

Barter - Treasury Report - Letters to Editor

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Collector vs Investor Debate.

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How I got into Barber Dimes.

Barber's. A Great Collectors Series.

Odds & Ends. Membership Feedback.

Few Days in Life of Barber Collector.

Barber Coin Collector's Society ByLaws.

Questions & Answers. Thought you'd never ask.

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1895-O Barber Dime. Undervalued Rarity.

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The 1914-S Barber Quarters.

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Analyzing BCCS B/50¢ Rarity Ratings.

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New, Lower Advertising Rates in Effect.

Membership Letters and Treasurer's Report.



CLASSIFIED ADS

Any member may run a classified ad in the *Journal*. The rules as well as the deadline much the same way as for display advertising. The cost is 10 cents per word, with a \$3.00 minimum. Words count as follows: Date & mint-mark - 1 word; name initials - 1 word; address # - 1 word; zip code - 1 word.

If you have Barbers you want to buy or sell and don't need a lot of space to do it, the *Classified Section* is for you.

BARBER DIMES: PCGS MS62 1892, \$125; PCGS MS60 1893-O, \$290; PCGS MS62 PQ 1895, \$975; ANACS MS62 1901-S, \$1,250; PCGS MS61 PQ 1904-S, \$950; PCGS AU58 1913-S, \$340; ANACS MS61 1915-S, \$240. Write Paul A. Gilkes, BCCS #408, 822 Taft St., Sidney, OH 45365, or call (513) 498-1140 after 7pm EST.

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FREE CLASSIFIED AD

Attention BCCS Members:

Use this coupon to run 1 FREE 25-35 word advertisement in the next issue of the Barber Coin Collectors' Society *Journal*. A copy of this coupon will also be accepted.

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BARBER HALF DOLLARS LIVE ON!
DON'T ASSUME LOTS OF HIGH-GRADE PIECES ARE AVAILABLE,
AND DON'T EVER CALL THEM 'MORGAN' HALF DOLLARS.

by Alan Herbert

Reprinted by permission from January 1991 issue of Coins Magazine.

IN just two more years the first of the Barber half dollars will be a century old. The series ended in 1915, but many of the coins continued to circulate until the early 1960s. So any collector who is 40 years old or older can remember seeing these coins in daily commerce.

Unlike the dinosaurs, who seemingly disappeared from the face of the earth overnight, Barber half dollars remained a significant presence through the advent of two new series of halves: the Walking Liberty series of the World War II and postwar era and the Franklin series that was suddenly terminated to make way for the Kennedy 50-cent piece in 1964.

One somewhat puzzling aspect of the Barber halves—and for that matter the quarters and dimes designed by chief engraver Charles E. Barber—was that they were known to many early day collectors as “Morgan” halves, quarters and dimes. There were a couple of probable reasons for this misnomer.

George T. Morgan had designed the somewhat similar Liberty on the silver dollars introduced in 1878, a series that would continue through 1921. Despite that Morgan's version of Liberty faced right (viewer's left) and Barber's faced left, the comparison was close enough to rob Barber of much of the credit for the coins he initiated.

The Barber coins were introduced 14 years after the Morgan dollar. The suddenly growing number of collectors who got interested in coins after World War I were working in the dark, as much of the basic knowledge about coins that we take for granted today was lacking.

Morgan was getting the spotlight because of the multitude of controversies surrounding the generally unloved and unwanted cartwheels, and some of this notoriety was bound to fall on the Barber pieces.

It might not surprise you that old habits die hard, despite the advanced state of the current numismatic scene, where any of a dozen or more books will provide the correct information about coin designers. Within the past month I received a letter asking a question about a “Morgan” dime from a collector who had not yet escaped from the ignorance of the past or in whom the habit was so ingrained by years of misuse that he automatically used the wrong name.

THIS brings us around to collecting Barber halves. It would seem that, if they were still circulating in the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, they ought to be fairly easy to collect. They were, and they weren't.

Obviously a collector who got started in the 1950s could find a significant percentage of the dates and mintmarks in circulation or, at worst, available for a slight premium from a local coin shop.

The coins were there, but unfortunately time had taken its toll. A majority of the Barber coins in circulation, even the big half dollars, were worn smooth, to the

point where the date and mintmark disappeared. These coins are commonly called "slicks."

If you merely wanted to fill one of the cardboard coin boards, you could find plenty of well-worn pieces, but one hazard was that many of them were worn to the point where they were too small to fit into the holes and had to be held in place with cellophane tape, to the serious detriment of the coin.

Then where do the high-grade Barbers come from? Who had them? Who could afford to keep rolls or even bags, of half dollars stored away against the day when they would become valuable collectibles?

Certainly it was a handful of collectors who were rich enough and astute enough to do this before the turn of the century.

Besides the sheer cost, there was the unsettling oversupply of half dollars created by the immense (for the day) production of the 1892-1893 Columbian Exposition commemoratives. These, too, got a lot of publicity and, since they were designed by Morgan, may have been another factor in the confusion over coin designers.

The answer to the question lay in a little known fact of financial stability of the times:

More than a few Barber half dollars were sold by the Treasury to small, medium and large banks all over the country. The coins went directly to the vaults and stayed there as a hard-money reserve to back either the paper money issued by the bank itself or to serve as a support for loans that the bank had made.

Many of these varying hoards came to light in the 1930s, when banks failed and cleaned out their hard assets to pay off depositors, even if only cents on the dollar. These were the coins that circulated through World War II and still managed to survive for another decade or more.

A few of these hoards somehow survived even this drain and lasted until the silver boom of 1980, which in most cases cleaned out the last remnants.

Another source were the bags of coins shipped overseas as specie payments, especially to European countries. Many a bag of Barbers wound up in a Swiss or English bank vault, and many a Barber coin turned up in the bowls of coins that European antique shops had a habit of displaying in their front windows.

TODAY collectors can benefit from what amounts to a bountiful supply of an "old" coin that, as much as any other, demonstrates age is by no means always a factor in a coin's value.

We have to keep Barber half dollars in the proper perspective, because even though they are moments away from official "antique" status, the grade and the mint where they were struck have a direct bearing on their relative value.

There are just over 70 different dates and mints that comprise the Barber half-dollar series. Of that number more than two-thirds catalog at \$10 or less in the lowest grade (G-4), including the first Barber half from Philadelphia, which had a mintage of only 935,245.

That is by no means the lowest mintage for the Barber series. The 1892 halves struck at New Orleans had a mintage of only 390,000 but command 7 1/2 times as much as the Philly strikes, at \$75.

There are 19 other dates and mints with mintages lower than a million coins,

the lowest of all being the 1914 Philadelphia mintage of 124,610.

This is where things begin to get puzzling for most collectors. Because of the extremely low mintage, the 1914 “plain” Barber half is considered a key coin in the series if not the premier coin of the group. Why then does it command a price of only \$800 in grade MS60 and “only” \$11,000 in MS-65?

Both these values, of course, would put a crimp in the average collector’s budget, but they pale in comparison to some of the more plentiful—or at least higher-mintage—halves. There are 11 other dates and mints that catalog for \$800 or more in MS-60, several of them with mintages as much as 10 times that of the 1914.

A DETAILED study of the Barber halves quickly reveals that these are but a few of the many paradoxes this series hides. The astute collector can find many different quirks that can be turned into potential profit or at the very least can be used to assemble an eye-catching collection.

Right at the beginning we find figures that might otherwise be suspect. In 1892 Barber half dollars were struck at Philadelphia, New Orleans and San Francisco. New Orleans had the lowest mintage, San Francisco the highest.

Want to bet on which MS-65 coin brings the top price?

It’s San Francisco, at \$11,000, compared to \$10,000 for an 1892-O and \$7,550 for a Philadelphia half.

The most expensive Barber in MS-65? It’s the 1904-O, tagged at \$17,000. That’s unbelievable, if we look only at the mintage figure, because New Orleans struck 1,117,600 Barber halves that year.

The probable answer is that the majority of the freshly struck coins were shipped directly to South and Central America, especially to newly independent Panama.

Another curiosity of the Barber half series is the monotonous pricing of the proof specimens. If you are prone to memorizing coin values and can keep them in your head as you are browsing the coin shops and bourse floors, you have just two figures to remember: \$8,800 and \$9,200.

For that matter, just remember the first figure, because it applies to every Barber half grading proof-65, except for the 1914.

Can anyone explain why the 1892-S halves are the most expensive in the lowest grade, eclipsing the \$75 for the 1892-O, which had a third the mintage? Or the 1897-S at \$76.50, yet a mintage of over 900,000?

Were these San Francisco halves shipped to the Orient in such quantities as to skew the prices?

These are just some of the statistics you will find interesting in the Barber half-dollar series. There are more, ranging from the distinct plateau for prices at grade fine, reflecting the overwhelming number of “slicks” that escaped the melting pots in the early 1980s and that keep the low-grade prices low, to the comparisons you can make with other series and denominations worth far more for much larger mintages.

If you’ve been casting around for a series to collect, you could do far worse than to put some time into studying and collecting Barber half dollars. There are bargains to be had at present prices, and they may well be dropping in the coming months.



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